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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7069  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1049  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4442  
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Cuba, Syria/Palestinians,  
Golan, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (6/5)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported the visit to Damascus by Fernando Ramirez de Estenoz, Chief of the Foreign Relations Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee, featuring his meetings with Vice President Farouk Shara. A statement by the Syrian Arab News Agency said that talks focused on recent international and regional developments and the ongoing tension resulting from the US policy of hegemony. Shara and Estenoz reiterated the importance of boosting the bilateral relations between Syria and Cuba in all fields and activating the Non-Aligned Movement role on the occasion of holding the NAM summit in Havana in September 2006.

Papers also reported a press statement by Palestinian PM Hanieh to the Kuwaiti daily "Al-Rai Al-Am" describing relations between Syria and Palestinians as strong, saying "we feel proud of these relations and Syria's stances and support of the Palestinian people." "The latest visit to Syria by the Palestinian Authority's FM Mahmoud al-Zahar was successful in upgrading Palestinian diplomatic representation and admitting Palestinians to Syria without a visa," Hanieh said.

Papers also reported that the Arab group participating in the current session of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva agreed to set up a committee that consists of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and the International Federation of Arab Trade Unions to discuss the report of the ILO mission which visited the occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian territories. The Cairo-based Arab Labor Organization said in a statement published Sunday that its Director General, Ibrahim Qweider, stressed the necessity of contacting and meeting with other international groups taking part in the ILO Session to rally support for the Arab stance. Mr. Qweider called for a meeting to discuss the ILO agenda, pointing out that Arabs are keen to disclose Israel's grave violations of Arab labor rights and international laws and norms in the occupied Arab territories, including killings, destruction, and economic siege to push the Palestinians to starvation.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Vice-President Shara and Deputy Chairman of the National Progressive Front Qaddah review bilateral relations and regional and international developments with Fernando Ramirez de Estenoz, Chief of Foreign Relations Bureau of Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/5)

"Palestinian Prime Minister Hanieh reiterates support for national dialogue, rejects vote on the Detainees Document, and lauds Syrian campaign of solidarity with Palestinians" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/5)

"Rally and Speeches in Ba'albak in solidarity with Hizbollah. Denunciation of targeting SecGen Nasrallah continued. Media insulation of Nasrallah aggravates tension in the Lebanese arena" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

"President Mubarak calls on Israeli Prime Minister Olmert to establish a just peace in the region. Olmert pretends support for the Roadmap and hints at a meeting with PM Abbas" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

"An Arab Committee to discuss fallacies of report by the International Labor Organization mission to the occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian territories" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

"A US soldier killed in Al-Anbar. Clashes erupt in Basra and Baghdad. Destiny of Russian diplomats is still unknown. US Secretary of State Rice expresses concern over the security

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situation in Iraq and expects the designation of Iraqi Ministers of Interior and Defense " (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Our People Will Regain the Golan"  
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Elias Murad, Chief Editor of government-owned Al-Ba'th, commented (6/5) "Israel announced that the strategic planning unit on the expansion of settlements held a meeting in Ramon settlement, which overlooks Lake Tiberias, to discuss the possibility of increasing the number of Zionist settlers to 50,000 in the near future.

"This plan poses a direct threat to the Arabism of the Golan. It entrenches the state of aggression on our Syrian Arab land and shows an Israeli determination to disregard international resolutions of Arab summits and the declared Arab desire to achieve a just and comprehensive peaceful solution. Here we say: No country, no matter how powerful it may be, can maintain its power forever. And no country that others believe is weak can remain so for ever. Events have proved that the issue is not one of warplanes, tanks, missiles, and other weapons that some countries possess exclusively....

"Our occupied Golan and every other occupied Arab territory are sacred. They call upon all of us to carry out this duty, where we clarify things and explain to the world that if Israel continues its aggression and occupation of our lands, it will be posing a threat to world peace, and that no nation can remain silent about the occupation of its territory and its remaining in the hands of enemies. Consequently, Syrians will only be like others in choosing the right method and taking the road of resistance, which, apparently, is the only thing that Israel understands...."

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"To Cover Up Military and Political Failures"  
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Iz-Eddin Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (6/5): "The US Administration is tampering with the Lebanese situation and intensifying pressure on Syria to cover up its military, security, and political failures in Iraq, the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan, and the entire Arab and Islamic region...."

"Syria realizes that it is targeted by the United States and Israel; Syria builds its positions and policies accordingly and takes every necessary measure to fortify its cohesive national unity and strengthen its ability to foil the pressure. In this regard, it has achieved what the US Administration has not thought of: it has maintained its Arab and international presence, adhered to its constant national and pan-Arab principles, kept constant connection with the Arab resistance movements in Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon, and refused to surrender to the Israeli plans of aggression and blackmail concerning the occupied Golan, or to give up any part of the Golan no matter how small...."

"Will the US Administration return to political realism and admit its mistakes against Syria?"

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"Al-Ishaqi Is not a Massacre!"

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Adham al-Tawil, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/5): "US investigations into the Al-Ishaqi massacre in northern Baghdad have acquitted the US military of the killing of women and children...."

"In his defense of the acquittal of the American soldiers from the Al-Ishaqi massacre, a spokesman for the US State Department said: 'There are no clean wars.' This sentence could have been the only true sentence among all the continuing US lies about the massacres in Iraq if the US official had worded it in this way: 'There are absolutely no clean American wars'...."

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"Did Bush Do it?"

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Maha Sultan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/5): "President Bush appears to have endorsed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Convergence Plan, which makes it impossible to create a viable Palestinian state...."

"Olmert knows that he can act unilaterally and impose his plan on Palestinians and the international community as long as American support is available and reliable.... President Bush will not confront the Zionist Lobby in the US when the Republican Party is getting ready for elections.... Olmert also knows that there is no use negotiating with Palestinians over his plan because no Palestinian official can accept a plan that aims to usurp Palestinians lands...."

"Palestinians need to confront this situation with a unified position, not with differences and inter-Palestinian fighting...."

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